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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Tuesday, July 16, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Fruit pie questions are still coming in. Apparently that pie chat we had last week only started things. Just when I though we had pretty-well covered the pie situation for the present, in came more questions.

The first inquiry is about the fat to use in making pie crust. A listener writes: "Will you please tell me which kind of fat makes the best crust for pie? I've always used lard, as my mother did, but a friend of mine tells me that oil gives better results than any solid fat. Other people I know like still other kinds of cooking fat."

I'll tell you how the people in the Bureau of Home Economics, who have been making a special study of cooking fats, answer that question. They say: "You can make pie crust with any kind of fat you wish, but no fat has better shortening power than lard. If you like a flaky crust, use some solid fat like lard or some hydrogenated (hy-drah-gen-ate-ed) vegetable oil -- that is, a solid vegetable fat. If you like a crumbly crust, use melted fat or a cooking oil, such as corn, or cottonseed, or peanut oil."

Second pie query: "Please tell me which material -- tin, aluminum, glass and so on -- is best for baking pie?"

The answer to this is: "It depends upon the pie." Tin and aluminum are the best conductors of heat, which means, that they'll bake the crust most quickly. If you make pie by combining juicy fruit and raw pie crust and then baking them together, you want your crust to bake fast before the juice has time to soak into it. So you'll want to use a pan that is a good conductor of heat. But if you bake the crust first and aren't worried about soaking, you can use any kind of baking material -- enamelware or glass or the metals already mentioned.

Third question: "Please tell me how to whip canned milk?"

I'll give you directions for whipping evaporated milk, that is, the unsweetened canned milk. Condensed or sweetened canned milk doesn't whip. Heat a can of evaporated milk in boiling water for about 15 minutes. Keep it chilled in the refrigerator until you need it. Then pour the milk out into a straight-sided cold bowl, set in a pan of ice and water, and beat until stiff. You can often use whipped evaporated milk in desserts in place of whipped cream. If you don't like the evaporated milk flavor, you can conceal it with definite flavoring such as chocolate or coffee or certain fruits. This milk, like cream, always whips better when it is cold.

Here are a couple of canning questions. One home canner wants information on putting up a soup mixture. She says some cans of good mixed vegetable soup would be very handy on her pantry shelves next winter, if she only was sure about a safe canning method.

Well, here are three mixtures that have proved popular for home canning. First mixture: 1 quart of green corn; 1 quart of lima or snap beans; 1 sliced onion; and 1 chopped green pepper. That makes an extra-fine soup mixture added to a little good meat stock, or even creamed. Now, here's a second mixture: 1 quart of sliced okra; 1 quart of lima beans; 2 quarts of peeled, cut tomatoes. And here's thie third mixture: plain succotash -- lima beans and corn.

The canning people say that for safety, you should can these mixtures always under pressure and use small containers. They say that pint jars or tins are better for them than quart containers.

About processing. The rule is: Process at the pressure and time needed by the vegetable in the mixture, which if canned alone, requires the longest processing period. Prepare each vegetable as if you were going to can it separately. Cut each one in small uniform pieces. When all are ready, put them into a small amount of boiling salted water. Boil in an uncovered kettle for five minutes. Then pack the boiling hot vegetables into hot sterilized containers. Pack loosely. Fill the containers with the boiling salted water in which you heated the vegetables. Of course, if the mixture contains tomato juice, you won't need to add water. Just bring the tomatoes to a boil, put in the other vegetables, and boil for five minutes. Pack hot. If you are canning succotash in tin, here's one point to remember to prevent discoloration. Use C-enamel tin cans.

Let's see, now. Shall I go over the high points for safety in putting up vegetable soup mixtures? Here they are: small-size, sterilized containers; pre-cooking; a hot, loose pack; and a pressure cooker.

A lady who wants to can some fruit juices has written to ask whether she should process in a boiling-water bath or in a pressure cooker. The answer is: "Neither." Fruit juices are acid; -acid foods don't need canning under pressure for safety. Moreover, fruit juices, all liquid as they are, are so easy for the heat to penetrate that they don't even need a boiling temperature for sterilization. As a matter of fact, boiling isn't recommended because it spoils their fresh flavor. So, briefly, the way you can or bottle fruit is this: First, extract the juice as you do for jelly. Strain it and add sugar, if you care to. (Sugar isn't necessary for preservation, but it does help keep the color and flavor.) Heat the juice to the simmering point. Then pour it into hot sterilized bottles or jars almost to the top but not quite since the heating may cause it to expand. Seal the bottles and set them in a hot-water bath that covers them -- comes at least two inches above the top. Heat the water to the simmering point for 10 minutes. Now your juice is ready to store away.

As we've often mentioned before, the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C., has much helpful information on home canning. If you want the canning bulletin, for example, you can just send a postcard to the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., and ask for it. You're welcome to a free copy as long as the supply lasts.

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